

## *The Essential Connection* *State of Colorado* *Work-Life Options*

**Work-Life options** strive to support a productive and performance-driven state workplace by accommodating the balance between work and life responsibilities. These innovative and flexible management tools are based on the core values of trust, respect, and support. The Work-Life Program is intended to support state managers in getting the work done efficiently in a work culture that enhances citizen service and satisfaction by making the state a better place to work. State managers are encouraged to engage in partnerships with employees to address issues and solve problems. Work-Life options are not an employee right or benefit.

- **Policies.** The state's policy, as an employer, on work-related family issues has been established through various [Executive Orders and a Joint House Resolution](#). Executive Order D001 98 establishes accountability for leadership through the requirements to include work-life information in new employee orientation and to evaluate supervisors of state employees on their use of work-life programs and practices. Other executive orders address job sharing and flextime for employees in the state personnel system. Joint resolution 99-1044 encourages the use of certain work-life programs as a means to address traffic congestion.
- **Child Care Tuition Discounts.** State employees receive a discount in tuition from seven child care providers: ABC Child Development Centers (Greeley), Children's World, La Petite Academy, Kindercare, Little Peoples Landing, Kids Place, and Kiddie Academy. The state does not endorse any of these providers and all arrangements are between the individual and the provider.
- **Child Care Resource and Referral.** [Colorado Office of Resource and Referral Agencies, Inc.](#) manages a statewide network of resource and referral agencies that serve Colorado families by providing tips for choosing quality child care and helping families find suitable care. Bright Beginnings prepared a brochure on "[Working Your Way Through the Child Care Maze](#)" to assist childcare consumers in making educated choices.
- **Eldercare Resources.** When an elder relative becomes dependent on an employee, the problems can be complex and services can vary among communities. The State does not endorse any provider and all arrangements are strictly between the individual and the provider.
  - [National Eldercare Locator](#) is a directory service operating nationwide to provide referral numbers and information on the area in which an elder lives. The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging sponsors it. The web site also has a link to the Administration on Aging homepage that provides additional information. [National Eldercare Locator](#) can be reached at **1-800-677-1116**, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time (7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mountain Time), Monday through Friday. A caller should have the county and city or zip code of the person requiring assistance and a brief description of the need.
  - [Nursing Homes](#) - For help choosing a care provider within Colorado please visit the Colorado Health Facilities Division section on [nursing homes](#) or for help choosing a facility outside Colorado please visit the Medicare [nursing home comparison](#) page.
  - The [American Association of Retired Persons](#) (AARP) also provides information for caregivers

and resource and referral on facilities and services.

- Other sources of information include local social services agencies and [Area Agencies on Aging](#).
- **State Employee Wellness Center.** HEALTHBREAK, Inc. operates the [wellness center](#) at 1570 Grant and also offers many other wellness programs, available to all State employees. The Department of Personnel and Administration (DPA) is excited to bring a wellness facility and wellness program to State employees at no cost to the State. According to Troy Eid, former Executive Director for the Department of Personnel and Administration, *“This is a win-win situation for us. This contract is a way to bring fitness and wellness programs to our employees in order to help them lead healthier lives. Having a fitness facility in the Capitol Complex area will provide a low-cost and convenient way for employees to maintain or improve their overall health.”*
- **Financial Planning, Mortgage, Debt and Credit Counseling, and Identity Theft Protection Services.** For assistance with issues such as retirement or financial planning, estate and will planning, home buying, credit, refinancing, debt management, identity theft, and college saving and investing options please access the Work-Life Employee [Resource/Referral](#) section of the website. Many vendors, public, private, and non-profit, offer no-cost seminars and services.
- **Leave Package.** There are several types of leave that can be used for personal and family needs.
  - [Family Sick Leave](#) allows the state employee to use accrued sick leave for family needs.
  - [Family and Medical Leave](#), mandated by federal law, allows the use of up to 520 hours per fiscal year for the birth/placement of a child or the serious health condition of the employee or a family member (see related [forms](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#)).
  - [Leave Sharing](#) allows the donation of annual leave to other state employees who are experiencing a [catastrophic illness, injury, or event](#) either personally or with an immediate family member.
  - [School and Community Volunteer, and Test/Interview Leave](#). Allows appointing authorities to grant administrative leave to participate in school activities in order to enhance a child’s educational experience, to participate in volunteer activities that benefit the community at large, or to participate in exams and interviews for state jobs. Appointing authorities are encouraged to develop consistent policies that are communicated to all employees within their organizations.
  - [Victim Protection Leave](#). Allows unpaid leave for victims of stalking, sexual assault, or domestic abuse or violence to seek a restraining order, obtain medical care or counseling for the employee or the employee’s children, secure or seek safe housing, or seek legal assistance and participate in legal proceedings.
- **[Employee Discount Program](#).** A number of service vendors offer employee discounts to any permanent state employee, regardless of branch of government. All discounts offered through the Work-Life Program are generally available to any state employee. The state does not endorse any of these providers and all arrangements are between the individual employee and the provider.
- **[Flexplace \(telecommuting or telework\)](#).** “Working Smarter” is an arrangement where state employees can work from home when appropriate (please also see the sample [Flexplace Participation Agreement](#)).

- **Job Sharing**. Allows two part-time employees to perform the work of one full-time state job.
- **Flextime**. Allows work schedules to be redesigned with flexibility to meet a variety of personal needs while still working a full schedule, e.g., flexible daily schedule, compressed work week, etc.
- **Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (FSA)**. Through the state's **benefits** program, employees are allowed to pay dependent care expenses with pre-tax dollars, thus, lowering taxable income as well.
- **Manager Awareness**. A brochure to highlight the value of implementing flexible workplace initiatives in the modern work environment.
- **Lactation Rooms**. Provides a private room at selected state work sites for nursing mothers who return to work while continuing to nurse their children.
- **Education/Training**. Offers seminars on work-life related issues.
- **Commuter Choice Program**. Based on the 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, employees are allowed to have the cost of rapid transit passes or qualified monthly parking fees deducted from their gross income on a pre-tax basis. The state's program for its employees was effective January 1, 2000. Qualified costs are payroll deductions for agency-sponsored RTD bus/light rail passes and parking. Participation is voluntary. While taxes are reduced, employees are cautioned that the total gross salary reported to PERA is also reduced. Thus, if employees are retiring within 3 years, retirement pay may be affected because reduced total gross salary may impact highest average salary calculations. For additional information or forms, contact your agency payroll office.
- **Benefits**. The state provides a number of medical, dental, life, and disability insurance programs. Included is the ability to pay health premiums on a pre-tax basis. Health care flexible spending accounts are also available where pre-tax funds are paid into the account and then reimbursed for qualifying expenses not covered by insurance.
- **Colorado State Employee Assistance Program (CSEAP)**. No-cost program for state employees that offers consultation for supervisors and managers, mediation, group facilitation, critical incident debriefings, confidential counseling, and workshops/classes on topics like anger, stress, workplace violence, domestic violence, and dealing with difficult people. CSEAP's goal is to improve, enhance, and make safe, our workplace environment for everyone.
- **Retirement**. The **Public Employees Retirement Association** is the retirement program for most state employees. PERA provides survivor benefits and, for vested employees, short-term disability and disability retirement. Life insurance, financial planning, and a 401k savings plan are also offered. Contact is 303-832-9550 or 1-800-759-7372. The **U.S. Department of Labor** also provides tips on preparing for retirement.
  - **Tax Deferred Savings Plans**. State employees have several additional, hassle-free ways to save for retirement in addition to PERA. You can choose the State's 457 Deferred Compensation Plan, PERA's 401(k) program or one of the 403(b) tax-deferred annuity plans (if employed by the Dept. of Higher Education) as a supplement to your retirement or pension.
- **Colorado State Employees Credit Union**. A member-owned, non-profit organization providing a full range of financial services. Membership is open to permanent, temporary, retired, and contract state employees and immediate family members. Contact the office nearest you. Employees in higher

education may also be eligible for membership in other credit unions.

- **Working Together Foundation**. A private, non-profit organization established exclusively to provide emergency financial assistance to state employees in crisis. The foundation is funded solely by state employee contributions. Any permanent state employee with six (6) months of state service is eligible to apply (regardless of branch of government). Tax-deductible contributions come primarily through the [Colorado Combined Campaign](#) but direct donations are always welcome. Contact is 303-831-8645 or 1373 Grant Street, Denver, CO 80203.

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